

City of Fort Lauderdale
Parks & Recreation Department

MILLS POND PARK



The PLACE to PLAY!

Softball League Rules Spring 2010

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Fort Lauderdale, FL 33311

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Table of Contents	
Section 1 - League Organization	3
Section 2 - Game Rules	11
Section 3 - Equipment & Uniforms	19
Section 4 - Protest Policy	20
Section 5 - Park Policy	21
Index	22
Notes	23

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Index To Rules

Alcoholic Beverages.....	5.1	Make-up Games.....	1.5
Balls.....	3.1	Managers Responsibility.....	1.4
Base Interference Rule.....	2.12	Metal - Tipped Cleats.....	3.4
Bats.....	3.2	Park Rules.....	5.4
Coed Rules.....	2.11a	Player Conduct.....	2.14
Coolers.....	5.2	Player Ejection.....	2.15
Courtesy Runner.....	2.9	Player Eligibility.....	1.11
Corporate Coed Rules.....	2.11b	Pets.....	5.3
Extra Player.....	2.3	Protest Procedure.....	4.2
Forfeits.....	1.8	Rainouts/Lightning.....	1.7
Format.....	1.1	Re-Entry Rule.....	2.16
Game Time.....	2.7	Regulation - Official Game.....	2.5
Gate Rule.....	2.13	Required Number of Players.....	2.2
Governing Rules.....	2.1	Rescheduling Games.....	1.6
Grace Period.....	2.8	Run Rule.....	2.11
Home Run Limits.....	2.10	Schedules.....	1.2
Injured Player.....	2.4	Scoring.....	1.3
Insurance.....	1.14	Specialty League Rules.....	2.17
Kansas City Tie Breaker.....	2.6	Team Classification.....	1.9
League Awards & Playoff Awards.....	1.15	Team Roster/Waiver.....	1.10
League Playoffs.....	1.12	Uniforms.....	3.3
League Standings.....	1.13	Valid Protest.....	4.1

Section 1 – League Organization

1.1 Format

- A. All leagues consist of a 10 game season, plus playoffs for the top 4 (four) teams within the Division.
- B. League officials reserve the right to amend the format of the league and/or playoffs due to weather or any unforeseen circumstances.

1.2 Schedules

- A. Managers will be called, or emailed (if applicable) with their first game time prior to the start of the league. Managers must pick up their team's schedule on their first night of play.
- B. Schedules will be posted nightly on the league information board located behind the softball office as well as on the league website: **www.fortlauderdale.gov/cityparks/mills_pond**
- C. Make-up schedules will be posted on the league information board as need arises. Managers will be called, emailed, or given a revised schedule with their team's makeup game time. The updated schedule will also be posted online. Managers must provide league office with day and evening contact numbers and an email address.

1.3 Scoring

- A. The home team (team listed second on the schedules) will be the official scorekeeper.
- B. League office will provide all teams with a team scorebook, to be picked up on the first night of play.
- C. It is recommended that both teams keep a scorebook.
- D. If the home team does not have an official scorekeeper the visiting team may become home team by keeping the official scorebook.

- E. If neither team keeps the book, the umpire is the official scorer and no protests regarding scoring will be accepted. The umpire's decision will be final.
- F. Scores are reported to the league official via umpires scorecard. **The winning team must initial the umpires scorecard.** Standings are updated and posted each night on the league information board located behind the softball office as well as on the league website: **www.fortlauderdale.gov/cityparks/mills_pond**. Please check your standings to make sure they are accurate.

1.4 Managers Responsibility

The Manager is the primary link between their team and league management. It is the manager's responsibility to obtain all information regarding league play at Mills Pond Park. This responsibility includes:

- A. Register team into appropriate league.
- B. Obtain pertinent league information: rulebook, schedules and scorebook.
- C. Assume all financial responsibility for league fees. Submit fees and league roster on time.
- D. Inform league office of changes in manager's address, contact number(s) and/or email address.
- E. **Have all players completely fill out, sign team roster, and have it submitted to league office before the first game.**
- F. Explain Mills Pond rules to team members.
- G. **Maintain control over team members in all circumstances including disputes on the field. Umpires will discuss disputes on the field with the managers only. Players are not to question an umpire's call or ruling.**

- 1. Date, time of game, field game played on.
- 2. The rule and section of the USSSA/Mills Pond Rule Book under which the protest is being filed.
- 3. The umpire's ruling and why it was incorrect (cite the rule).

- D. During divisional playoffs, all protests must be addressed at the time the protest is introduced.

Section 5 – Park Policy

5.1 Alcoholic Beverages

Alcoholic beverages purchased outside of Mills Pond Park are **NOT** permitted to be brought into the softball complex. Alcoholic beverages are not permitted on the playing field or in the dugout. **Consumption of alcoholic beverages in the parking lot is strictly prohibited in all City of Fort Lauderdale Parks unless a permit is obtained.**

5.2 Coolers

Coolers are **not** permitted within the softball complex.

5.3 Pets

No pets are allowed in the park. Only service animals are permitted.

5.4 Park Rules

The park will determine any situation not covered in these rules. In addition, Mills Pond Park reserves the right to interpret any and all rules and situations and further reserves the right to insert, delete, or change rules at any time and make decisions retroactive should it be deemed necessary for the benefit of the league

- E. A player in violation (using an illegal bat) will be ejected from the game. An out is called and all action is nullified.

3.3 Uniforms

Teams are encouraged to wear like uniforms. However, there is no mandatory uniform rule. Shorts and athletic shoes must be worn at all times. Hats are optional.

3.4 Metal – Tipped Cleats

No metal-tipped cleats are to be worn in league play. A player wearing metal-tipped cleats will be asked to remove them.

Section 4 – Protest Policy

4.1 Valid Protest

Protests will be accepted in the case of rule interpretation only. No “judgment” call can be protested. Umpires are instructed to accept all protests regardless of their validity and must note it on the scorecard.

4.2 Protest Procedure

- A. The notification of “Intent to Protest” must be made immediately before the next pitch, if it is the conclusion of the game, it must be done before both teams leave the field of play. Once the game is complete and both teams have left the field, no protest can be filed.
- B. The manager or acting manager of the protesting team shall immediately notify the plate umpire that the game is being played under protest. The plate umpire shall in turn notify the opposing manager and official scorekeeper. The protest will be noted on the umpire’s scorecard.
- C. The official protest must be filed in writing 24 hours after the start of the game and submitted to the league office directly at Mills Pond Park. The written protest must contain the following:

1.5 Make-up Games

All games cancelled (by league office or due to weather) will be made up on the same night of league play when possible. Managers will be called or emailed with makeup time and date or will be given a revised schedule. Makeup games will also be posted online.

1.6 Rescheduling Games

If at any time, a team is unable to play a scheduled game (due to an unforeseen circumstance), it is our policy to reschedule the game with approval from the opposing team if the time permits within the league’s schedule. **Rescheduling must be done at least one (1) week in advance or the game may not be rescheduled.** The team needing to reschedule must:

- A. Contact league office at 954-828-8942 (Jason), 954-828-8946 (Ronnie) and/or email us at **MillsPondAthletics@fortlauderdale.gov** about rescheduling games.
- B. Call opposing team regarding game rescheduling.
- C. Inform the office of opposing team’s decision.

1.7 Rainouts/Lightning

- A. In the event that rain occurs between the time you call and the time you arrive, please understand, our primary goal is to SAFELY play softball. If in doubt, come out!
- B. Decisions regarding rainouts are made at 5:30 p.m. (4:30 p.m. on Sundays) on the day of the game. At this time, if the game is rained out, the message on the rain out line will be updated with the necessary information. If games get rained out at any time during the evening, the message will then be updated accordingly. **For rainout information please call (954) 828-5977** (after 5:30 p.m., 4:30 p.m. on Sunday). Please do not call the league office for rain out information, thank you!

- C. In the event of rain or inclement weather during a game, the game may be considered official after five innings of play (4 ½ if the home team leads).
- D. If a rainout occurs during playoff games, the game will be replayed from the start unless it is a complete game (4 ½ or 5 innings).
- E. Per the City of Fort Lauderdale's lightning policy, once lightning is detected or sighted or thunder is heard, all participants and employees are to take shelter from outside. Once lightning is detected, all players & officials will be cleared from the field of play. Once the thunder and lightning has stopped for a minimum of 15 minutes, play may resume.

1.8 Forfeits

- A. Any team forfeiting more than two games (as a no show or without calling the office) will be dropped from the league.
- B. A forfeit game will be scored as 7-0.

1.9 Team Classification

- A. All Men's, Coed and Corporate Coed teams will be classified as Division 1, 2 and 3. Division 1 (Advanced), Division 2 (Intermediate), Division 3 (Recreational). In the interest of fair play, any team registered in Division 3 **will not** be allowed to have any tournament players or players deemed to be a detriment to the league (to be determined by league officials). If a team is in violation of this rule, appropriate penalties will be exercised. **Please note NO Division 1 players will be allowed in Division 3.**
- B. All teams are required to remain in the division that they last participated in while part of the previous softball league with the following exceptions:
 - 1. Any team will be allowed to move up a division upon registration.

- D. ABC League
 - 1. Men's Divisions will play under Mills Pond Division 2 Rules.
 - 2. Coed Division will play under Mills Pond Corporate Coed 2 Rules.
 - 3. No inning starts after 65 minutes.
- E. DOT League
 - 1. Plays under modified corporate coed rules.
 - 2. Two (2) women required, can play infield or outfield.
 - 3. No inning starts after 65 minutes.
- R. SUN SENTINEL League
 - 1. Plays under modified Corporate Coed rules.
 - 2. Run Rule is 15 runs after 5 innings.
 - 3. Unlimited homeruns / Unlimited number of batters

Section 3 – Equipment and Uniforms

3.1 Balls

- A. The city will provide all balls.
- B. The City will provide only one new and one back-up ball per game. **If the ball goes foul (over the fence), or a home run is hit, it is the teams responsibility (that hit the ball over the fence) to retrieve the ball. NO EXCEPTIONS! The game will be stopped if a ball is not available until a ball is retrieved.**

3.2 Bats

- A. All bats approved by USSSA are legal for league play at Mills Pond.
- B. All bats must be marked with the words "Official Softball" and should be marked with a Bat Performance Factor (BPF) of 1.20 or less.
- C. No altered bats will be allowed.
- D. No titanium bats will be allowed.

- E. Fighting will not be tolerated. If a player or players are ejected for fighting they will be put on immediate suspension. The length of the suspension will be determined by the League Director. The team that they are playing for will also be issued a written warning and will be on probation (zero tolerance policy) for the remainder of the season.

2.16 Re-Entry Rule

Any of the starting players may withdraw and re-enter once, providing such player occupies the same batting position, wherever he/she is in the line up. A substitute, who is withdrawn, may not re-enter. All substitutions must be reported to the home plate umpire.

2.17 Specialty League Rules

All specialty league games will be played under Mills Pond Park Rules excluding the variances listed below:

A. SFAAA Men's League

1. 6-10 Pitching Arc
2. Homeruns per game:
 - Division B Two (2) Homeruns
 - Division C One (1) home run
 - Division D No (0) home runs
3. May bat 9, 10, 11 or 12 players in line-up.
4. No inning starts after 55 minutes.
5. Re-entry rule, same as A.S.A.

B. SFFFA Women's League

1. 6-10 Pitching Arc
2. Unlimited homeruns per game.
3. May bat 9, 10, 11 or 12 players in line-up.
4. No inning starts after 55 minutes.
5. Re-entry rule, same as A.S.A.

C. GLO League

1. 6-10 Pitching Arc
2. One (1) homerun per game.
3. May bat 9, 10, 11 or 12 players in line-up.
4. No inning starts after 60 minutes.
5. Re-entry rule, same as A.S.A.

2. Any team finishing first in the regular season and/or playoffs will be required to move up to the next highest division. **NO EXCEPTIONS!**
3. With **league approval only**, will a team be permitted to drop down a division.
4. **The league reserves the right to move any team up, down, or allow them to stay in the same division at our discretion.**

- C. Any team comprised of 7 or more of the same players as the previous season will be considered a returning team (Team may be asked to provide complete roster prior to registration.)
- D. New teams are asked, in the spirit of fair play, to place themselves in a division they feel best suited to compete in.

1.10 Team Roster/Waiver Form

A. Team rosters are limited to 20 players.

- B. **The Roster/Waiver form is due before the first game.** It is the manager's responsibility to submit a complete roster (name, signature, address and email address for each player). The team must submit a completed roster to the league official before the start of their first game. If the team has not turned in a completed roster before the start of the first game, the time used to complete the roster will be taken off the game time.

- C. **An add/drop period for players will be offered until the seventh played game. After this point NO roster changes can be made – NO EXCEPTIONS!**

- D. As stated previously, any team playing in Division 3 may not have any tournament or Division 1 players (which are deemed to be a detriment to the league) on their roster.

- E. **Roster/Waiver must be filled out in complete form: print name, signature, address, email address and telephone number. No signature makes for an ineligible player. Once the team's roster is submitted and signed by a league official, the roster is considered an official roster.**

- F. The submission of the original roster and any add/drop changes must be made in person at Mills Pond Park.
- G. Original rosters (office copies) will be used for any protest involving player eligibility and also during playoffs. Players must be on the team's original roster and have matching I.D. to be an eligible player.
- H. **Team rosters (office copy) will be checked during all playoff games.**

1.11 Player Eligibility

- A. Players may not compete on more than one team in the same division on the same night. (i.e. Joe's Bar and Bob's Bar in the Men's Division 1 on Tuesday night)
- B. Players may compete on more than one team in different divisions on the same night. (i.e. Joe's Bar in the Men's division 1A and Bob's Bar in the Men's Division 1B on Wednesday Night.)
- C. The opposing team may only protest the players' eligibility until the completion of the 5th inning. After this time, no protests involving the players' eligibility will be accepted unless a new player enters the game at which time, it must be protested and solved as the new player enters the game either offensively or defensively.
 - 1. If a team files a player protest, the protesting team must also have a roster on file. Otherwise the protest will not be accepted.
 - 2. A league official will be made aware of the protest. The team's roster (office copy) will be used. If no roster exists, the game will be declared a forfeit in the favor of the protesting team.
 - 3. Players are required to carry a driver's license or other official I.D. to each game and produce it upon request by an umpire or league official.
- D. If in violation, protests will result in forfeiture of the game against the team in violation of the rule.

2.14 Player Conduct

- A. It shall be the responsibility of the manager to control the actions of his/her players and fans. Only team members and scorekeepers are permitted on the team bench.
- B. Anyone drinking alcoholic beverages during the course of his/her game will be subjected to being ejected, no questions asked. This includes on the field, on the bench, on the ground surrounding the field, the parking lot, or any other area within the confines of the park!
- C. Unsportsmanlike conduct of any type or infractions of the rules could mean ejection from the game with the possibility of forfeiture or suspension.
- D. Derogatory remarks, profanity, threats, or physical force directed toward any game official, department employee, other players, coaches, or spectators will not be tolerated. These actions could result in suspension.

2.15 Player Ejection

- A. A player ejected from a game for misconduct may be subject to suspension, which will be determined by the league official.
- B. A player may appeal to the league office. The appeal must be made in writing to the league director. The player suspension will begin at the time of ejection, regardless of the appeal. The appeal will be addressed when the situation arises.
- C. In any infraction, the league reserves the right to amend/determine the length of suspension.
- D. If a player participates in a game during suspension, he/she will be further penalized; the team for which he/she plays for will be subject to forfeiture of the game.

- D. If a male batter is walked, the female has the option of accepting the walk or hitting. The male is awarded first and second base and must touch both bases in order.
- E. The 200-foot line for females will be in effect. (See 2.11a Coed Rules)
- F. The EP may be utilized. The extra player must be a female if you are using 11 players in the batting line-up. If you are using 12 players in the batting line-up the two (2) extra players must be a female and a male.
- G. The courtesy runner must be of the same sex as the original runner.
- H. Both males and females will use the 12" ball. The 200-foot line will be in effect when females are at bat. Outfielders may not be inside the line; infielders are not allowed to play in the grass or in front of the baseline until the ball is batted into play. **Penalty - batter is automatically awarded the first and second base and must touch both bases in order. All runners will advance if forced.**

2.12 Base Interference Rule

Any runner advancing to the next base (where a play may be made at the previous base) cannot interfere with the defensive player making a play. If, in the opinion of the Umpire, the interference is an obvious attempt to prevent a double play, the immediate succeeding runner shall also be called out. **Penalty – a dead ball is called, the runner interfering with the play is out and the runner at the base behind him/her is also out.**

2.13 Gate Rule

Gate must be closed at all times. **Penalty - if the ball goes into the dugout of the defensive team, runners advance one base from the last occupied base.** If the ball goes in the dugout of the offensive team, it is dead ball, and the runners do not advance.

1.12 League Playoffs

- A. League playoffs will be played amongst the top 4 teams within the Division. The format will be played as followed:
 - 1. 2nd place vs. 3rd place
1st place vs. 4th place
 - 2. The winners of the above will play for the championship.
- B. If two subdivisions of a division exist (i.e. Men's division 1A and 1B on Monday nights) the top 4 teams from each subdivision will be admitted to the play offs, forming an 8-team playoff. The first playoff game will be versus a team from the opposing subdivision using the same format as above.
- C. Playoffs will be held on the same night of league play following the conclusion of the regular season (time and weather permitting).
- D. All playoffs are single elimination. Playoff games are scheduled for one hour and five minutes after roster check is completed. There will be no time limit during the championship game of playoffs. The run rule will be in effect (see rule 2.11)
- E. Players may play for any team during divisional playoffs provided that they are on the team's original roster. Only one team per division. (see rule 1.11 A)
- F. Rosters will be checked during all playoff games. Players must produce official identification to match their name and signature on the roster.
- G. **Highest seed will be made home team (or visitor if they chose). If teams have the same seed, home team will be determined by coin flip. Home teams for all championship games will be determined by coin flip.**
- H. There will be a run rule during all playoff games. (see rule 2.11)

- I. There will be a Kansas City tie-breaker (see rule 2.6) and a time limit during all play off games.
- J. If rainout occurs during a playoff game, the game will be replayed from the start of the game unless 5 innings have been completed (4 ½ if the home team is winning).
- K. During playoffs all protests must be made before the next pitch is thrown.

1.13 League Standings

- A. Current league standings will be posted at the softball office on the night of play as well as on the league website: **www.fortlauderdale.gov/cityparks/mills_pond**. It is the manager's responsibility to check them for correctness and notify league administration of any errors.
- B. Final league standings will be determined at the conclusion of each leagues regular season.
- C. All end of regular season ties will be settled by the following tie-breaking system:
 - 1. Head to head won – loss record, if still tied...
 - 2. Head to head point differential, if still tied...
 - 3. Won-loss record versus beat common opponent, if still tied...
 - 4. Point differential versus best common opponent, is still tied...
 - 5. Won-loss record versus 2nd best common opponent
 - 6. Ad infinitum

1.14 Insurance

The City of Fort Lauderdale will not be liable for any medical expenses or claims for property damage. Players, managers and spectators are not protected by medical or liability insurance while on Mills Pond property (City of Fort Lauderdale).

1.15 League/Playoff Awards

- A. A team plaque is given for the regular season champion, regular season runner-up and playoff champion.

- E. When a male batter is walked, the following female batter has the option of accepting a walk or taking her normal at bat. The male is awarded first and second base and must touch bases in order. (Defensive team must appeal before the next pitch.)
- F. If a female touches first base before the male batter that was previously walked, the male batter is out.
- G. Defensive positioning shall consist of the following:
 - 1. 3 males and 3 females in the infield in any position
 - 2. 2 males and 2 females in the outfield in any position
- H. At no time may the number of players in the game from either sex exceed five (six if the EPs are used.)
- I. Both males and females will use the 12" ball. The 200-foot line will be in effect when females are at bat. Outfielders may not be inside the line; infielders are not allowed to play in the grass or in front of the baseline until the ball is batted into play. **Penalty - batter is automatically awarded the first and second base and must touch both bases in order. All runners will advance if forced.**

2.11b Corporate Coed

- A. A team must have a minimum of three females on the playing field at all times, more than three females may play. If only two females are available, the team may play with 9, no EP can be used and an out must be taken in the spot of the missing female. One female will play in the infield and one in the outfield when this occurs.
- B. One female must be in the infield and one in the outfield. The third female may play infield or outfield.
- C. Females may bat in any position in the line up.

- 5. Coed Division 2 One (1) home run per game
 - 6. Coed Division 3 No (0) home runs per game
 - 7. Corporate Coed 1 One (1) up (maximum three (3) per game)
 - 8. Corporate Coed 2 One (1) per game
- B. Please note that any home run hit after the team limit will be considered an out.

2.11 Run Rule

There is a run rule of 20 after 3 complete innings and 12 after 5 complete innings of play.

2.11a Coed Rules

- A. Teams should have an equal number of males and females (total of 10 players). Teams may start the game with a minimum of 9 players (male and/or female breakdown must be 4 to 5 of either sex) and a maximum of 12 players if the EP rule is utilized – **both male and female EP must be used.**
- B. The batting line up shall consist of alternating sexes with a female leading off.
- C. If a team begins with 9 players, an automatic out is given in the spot of the missing male/female. The missing person's out must be taken at the end of the batting order (9th spot if female, 10th spot if male). The automatic out is waived when the first of two same-sex batters is walked.
- D. In the event of any injury, the EP (male or female) may be used as an eligible substitute with the other EP (male or female) being dropped. If no EP or other eligible substitute is available, an automatic out is given in the spot of the injured player.

- B. Individual awards (12) are given for regular season and playoff champions.

Section 2 – Game Rules

2.1 Governing Rules

All games will be played under Mills Pond Park rules with reference to the USSSA rulebook for game rules not covered in the Mills Pond Park rulebook.

2.2 Required Number of Players

(Coed division has an exception to this rule see Coed Rule (2.11a))

- A. Nine (9) players must be present at game time or a forfeit will be declared.
- B. A tenth player may be added anytime before the start of the fifth inning.
- C. If a team starts with ten (10) players and one (1) player is ejected or leaves the game for any reason, except injury (see rule 2.4) the team may continue the game with nine (9) players but will receive an out in the position of the ejected or vacated player. If no substitute is available.
- D. If a team starts with eleven (11) players and one or two (1 or 2) players are ejected or leave the game for any reason, except injury (see rule 2.4) the team may continue the game with ten (10) players or nine (9) players, but will receive an out in the position of the ejected or vacated player(s), if no substitute is available.

2.3 Extra Player

(Coed division has an exception to this rule see Coed Rules 2.11a)

- A. The extra player (EP) is the eleventh player and may only be inserted at the start of the game. This person is an extra hitter and is not in the game defensively.

- B. If a team begins the game with the EP and a player is ejected and no other substitutes are available, the EP may be an eligible substitute to play defensively. However, the vacancy in the batting order resulting from the ejected player will be considered an automatic out if a substitute is not available.
- C. At any time during the game, the EP may enter and play defensively switching the defensive player to the EP. The original EP must remain in the same place in the batting order for the entire game.

2.4 Injured Player

(Coed division has an exception to this rule see Coed Rules 2.11a)

If a player is injured during a game, the team will not be penalized with an out in the spot of the injured player.

2.5 Regulation – Official Game

- A. Game length is seven innings or when the one hour and five minute time limit has expired.
- B. In the event of rain or any other unforeseen circumstance, a game may be considered official after 5 innings of play, or 4 ½ if home team leads. This rule applies for Playoffs as well.
- C. Each batter will start with a one-one count with an extra foul.
- D. All games tied at the end of the regulation game will be played to completion using the Kansas City tie breaker (2.6)

2.6 Kansas City Tie Breaker

If the score is tied after seven innings or the time limit expires the offensive team will place the last official out on second base. The next batter in the lineup will start with a full count (one pitch). This procedure is repeated until a winner is declared.

2.7 Game Time

- A. All games will be scheduled on the hour with a time limit of one hour and 5 minutes or 7 innings, whichever comes first.
- B. Umpires keep the official time. It is the coach's responsibility to get the start time from the home plate umpire so there is no discrepancy at the end of the game. The game time should be posted.
- C. Playoff games are scheduled for 1 hour and 5 minutes after the roster has been checked.

2.8 Grace Period

- A. A ten (10) minute automatic grace period will be given for the first game of the evening. The game will then be played assuming the original game time.
- B. There will be no grace period for any scheduled game after the first game on each field.

2.9 Courtesy Runner

- A. Each team will be allowed one courtesy runner per inning. The courtesy runner must be of the same sex as the original runner, and doesn't have to be the last out.
- B. If the courtesy runner is up to bat while on base, it will result in an out in the batters line up.
- C. Time must be called and the umpire must be notified of the use of a courtesy runner.

2.10 Home Run Limits - Per Game

- A. Home runs allowed, per team, per division:
 1. Men's Division 1 Four (4) home runs per game
 2. Men's Division 2 One (1) up (maximum three (3) per game)
 3. Men's Division 3 One (1) home run per game
 4. Coed Division 1 One (1) up (maximum three (3) per game)